

# The Vital Force

JOURNAL OF THE T'AI CHI CHIH® COMMUNITY

Volume 28, No. 1

for teachers & students

February 2011

## Justin's Words

### Something Of Value

BY JUSTIN STONE

Writing an article not only calls for knowing your subject, but making your subject known, and being immersed in it so that the reader has the opportunity to learn something of value. It is not hard to do, but it means that the writer must get across something of value, more than just information.

T'ai Chi Chih is often thought of as "physical activity" like gymnastics. It might cause a loss of weight and bring joy to the earnest practitioner. But the real truth lies in the circulation of *Chi*. T'ai Chi Chih has much broader effects than perhaps first realized.

The problem is, while it is spreading throughout the world, it suffers from not having enough teachers. We can build on this momentum. We are at the point where something can



cause the fast growth of TCC. There have been teacher trainings in Italy, France, and Canada, but when the time comes, will TCC be ready with enough teachers? Yes, we want students to be TCC practitioners, and we also want them to teach others.

*we can  
build  
on this  
momentum*

All you have to remember are two things: that there is much more to TCC besides its physical benefits. The second part is that we need more teachers in more places. A good deal more is expected of TCC. There is no doubt.

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"T'AI CHI CHIH IS A SERVICE TO HUMANITY. IT IS A FORM OF LOVE." JUSTIN STONE, ORIGINATOR

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# May The Vital Force Be With You

## - READER VOICES: MEG COSTELLO -

"The *Vital Force* is where I catch up on the news, events and conference excitement. May Swanson's article in the last issue and this sentence of hers led me to write: 'As long as we continue to teach classes, with the pureness of heart and love that Justin intended, students will come to learn.' Even with my heavy schedule and without advertising classes, I teach T'ai Chi Chih following closely all that Justin has taught me. It is my dream that Justin's words live on in the men and women I meet. Another dream is to get TCC into the school system so that violence may be eliminated from the minds and hearts of our children.

During a Christmas holiday open house, a kindergarten teacher asked if I could teach TCC after school. I offered to volunteer my services. When I am free with my services a class will appear. This January five New Jersey women are traveling to Philadelphia to learn TCC. The AARP article aroused their interest. A sadness hangs heavy because we do not have enough teachers to service the need for classes in Philadelphia. I have been asked to teach in the Chestnut Hill area several times – again because of the AARP article. But I am at the opposite end of the city and only teach in my home. Saturdays are the only mornings that I am available, and it is too far for people to travel. But still some come."

## - READER VOICES: JANE DICK -

"Enjoyed my talk with you when I ordered my Seijaku DVD. It's had a lot of use already. Since my mate of 61-plus years has had some minor health challenges, I haven't been able to attend reviews and/or conferences recently. Miss everyone and, of course, the stimulation and powerful energy. Pretty please, give Justin my love and appreciation, once again. Now that he has (understandably) requested no mailings, I miss this contact. I do have my Justin post card collection. ... I had a physical challenge at the end of summer and was doing T'ai Chi Chih in bed for several weeks, then sitting TCC and now recently Seijaku. The increased energy is amazing. And I love sharing the DVD with Justin. We have our very important, private meetings."

## - READER VOICES: BILL MOORE -

"BTW, I started adding the website addresses for [www.taichichih.org](http://www.taichichih.org) and [www.gkpub.com](http://www.gkpub.com) to all my student handouts (on movements, principles, etc.), so they could have them for ready reference. Positive responses from students. Not sure why it took so long for this idea to bubble up."

COMPILED BY KIM GRANT, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

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### Submission Guidelines

Please send articles as Word documents, electronically, to [tcc@kimgrant.com](mailto:tcc@kimgrant.com). If possible, please tailor your submission to a particular section; the newsletter will hang together better that way. A 1/4 page in this newsletter runs about 200 words; a 1/2 page is 400 words.

We are always in need of photos and artwork. Please send high resolution jpgs, which the Editor will crop and edit. If you have 10-12 pieces of related artwork – calligraphy, drawings, photographs, or something that will reproduce well in B/W – please submit them for consideration in an entire issue. *The Vital Force* reserves the right to edit submission for length and clarity.

### Web Site Updates

The on-line calendar and database (for [www.taichichih.org](http://www.taichichih.org)) will be updated within a week of the following deadlines: January 15, March 1, April 15, June 1, July 15, September 1, October 15, & December 1.

Editor: Kim Grant • Membership: Mary Ruiz • Submissions: Send articles, poetry and photos to Kim Grant at [tcc@kimgrant.com](mailto:tcc@kimgrant.com) or to The Vital Force, P.O. Box 92674, Albuquerque, NM 87199-2674 • Memberships: Send membership subscription requests, renewals, remittances and changes of address to The Vital Force, P.O. Box 92674, Albuquerque, NM 87199-2674. Memberships are \$40/year, \$50/year for international. Members receive four issues of The Vital Force. The printed annual Teachers Directory costs an additional \$15/year. It is also available for free at [www.taichichih.org](http://www.taichichih.org). If, for some reason, you do not receive an issue, send an e-mail to: [vfmembership@yahoo.com](mailto:vfmembership@yahoo.com). • Design: Amy K. Brown

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**Deadline: April 1**  
**Publication Date: Mid-May**  
 Musings on moving:  
 "The *Chi*, vital energy, should be actively excited; but the *shen*, spirit, must remain calm internally."  
*Joyous Breath*

**Deadline: July 1**  
**Publication Date: Mid-Aug**  
 Musings on gratitude:  
 "The great secret in T'ai Chi Chih is what happens to the Vital Force. We should be grateful for it."  
*Passing Clouds*

**Deadline: Oct 1**  
**Publication Date: Mid-Nov**  
 Musings on softness:  
 "Effortless flow from the substantial to the insubstantial and back is what causes the arms to move softly."  
*Six Healing Sounds*

**Deadline: Jan 1**  
**Publication Date: Mid-Feb**  
 Musings on the importance of practice: "TBD."  
*Cosmic Consciousness Pose*

# The Primacy Of Practice

BY PETE GREGORY, HIGHLAND, IN

Who moved my Chi(s)? Chaos, change, evolution, creation. 1.) Day-in-a-life stuff. The stuff of science and nature, and art. 2.) Isolating a moment in time can be unfair to the moment, meddling. 3.) We think with the memory we summon at the moment in question. 4.) How fresh is your practice?

To the importance of practice, Justin says "Sincere practice is rewarded – more than you know."

Is T'ai Chi Chih that dull that people need to blend it with restorative dancing, or other T'ai Chi practices, or weights, or anything else? (I had a student who "took TCC to another level" by slowing it down, adding this and that from other forms, and changing the name. Our conversation about it didn't go well.) Complacency, ego, traits and tendencies, entrenched misalignments... What stops you from experiencing "T'ai Chi Chih doing T'ai Chi Chih"? If you've had the experience, why stray?

Wouldn't it be swell if 20 top teachers spent an entire day together, comparing and contrasting the way they move? I only attended my

first conference in 2004, but the differences in people's movements were big. (Ironically, there's times when it'll be a teacher from Albuquerque who looks like the outsider, when, in fact, he or she may have had more lessons with Justin than we've had practices.) Can't agree? No worries, T'ai Chi Chih has a life force of its own. Check back in a hundred years to see what ideas aged well.

We don't need a hundred years to know that Justin gave us a masterpiece. Healing and growth, what's not to like? So smile, on 3... Who Moved my 1... 2...



# The Gift

BY LARRY BLOOM, SANDY SPRINGS, GA

The sunlight reflected off the fresh snow in our palm trees, sparkling playfully as the fronds rustled in the wind. What a nice gift. Metro Atlanta had not had a white Christmas since 1882 and when Chester Arthur was president. This was also a first for me. I paused to take in the beauty of the *yin* and *yang* composition of the palm trees and snow while "musing on the importance of practice."

It was the morning after Christmas and, indeed, no one was stirring in our house except for my dog Bella. I looked forward to an unhurried and delicious T'ai Chi Chih practice in front of these palms. My senses began to fill with gratitude in recognition of my good fortune. Again I thought: what a delectable gift, the snow and the opportunity to practice TCC in such an enchanting environment.

Starting with Rocking Motion was like greeting an old friend. A smile came to my face as we recognized each other. It was like a warm soulful hug as the internal glow of *Chi* came out to play and my fingers began to flutter. My personal practice has reached a point where I am not thinking about the movements so much, but rather they mostly move on their own and I just flow with them. When thoughts come to mind, I watch them come and go. I don't try to let them go; I just observe. If they are persistent, then a focus

on some aspect of the movement and on gratitude usually returns the pleasure of "no thinking" awareness. What a gift – joy through movement. And I sense that it will only get more joyful as I continue my practice over time.

I am not sure when I began to fully appreciate this gift. It is not unlike the gift of music lessons. It takes commitment and practice before one can read the notes and have his or her fingers automatically respond to hit the right keys in the right rhythm. Only through practice does the joy of playing a piano fully present itself. Having a piano in your living room does not make you a pianist any more than having exercise equipment in your home makes you fit.

For me, the gift of joy through movement points to the importance of practice. Only then does TCC practice provide the gift. The gift will meet us like an old friend with a big hug, but we have to meet it half way, that is with continued practice. I found that it was easy to stay committed to practice once I built the friendship.



## Learning From Justin's Lessons

By JUDY HENDRICKS, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

At an April teacher practice in Albuquerque, we were fortunate to have Justin and Antonia present. Justin was sharing his corrections, which was wonderful. My intention is always to do TCC the way Justin does it, but it's amazing how incorrect moves can creep into my practice.

Justin was clarifying how the fingertips come into the chest during Push Pull. (See page 55 of the textbook, Push Pull on the right side.) The hands are not way out at the shoulders. He also talked about how the hand that is palm down during the four "Taffy" movements is the *yang* hand, and that it stays close to the body after the taffy is pulled.

Justin has always stood up between the movements. In other words, he does not stay with his knees bent (in the closed position) continually between the movements.

Justin also says that a confirmatory sign that the *Chi* is flowing is when your fingers flutter (which is an involuntary movement). Stopping the fingers from moving would be stopping the flow of *Chi*. When one has been practicing TCC for awhile, the fingers will begin to move.

As a teacher I realize there is a responsibility to try to teach the movements the way Justin does them. Before every class I teach, I read my notes on the movements, I read the textbook and I look at the photos of Justin doing each movement. I then watch Justin's DVD, doing the movements with him, while watching myself in the mirror. I became a teacher in 2002, and I still do this before every class. I also listen to the CD "Justin Stone Speaks On Tai Chi Chih" on my way to my class. My intention is to be aware of how Justin moves and how he talks about TCC, so I can pass it on to my students.

try to  
teach the  
movements  
the way  
Justin  
does them

Justin has always said T'ai Chi Chih is a service to humanity. There are so many tremendous benefits from this wonderful practice, so I really strive to do and teach the movements the way Justin does them. I would also like to share something that Justin said at the end of that community practice: "If one tries to commercialize T'ai Chi Chih, it will die very quickly." I know TCC is alive and well when our intention is to do the movements correctly and knowing TCC is a service to humanity. Thanks Justin for this wonderful gift.

## Dancing With God

By DENNIS McCANN, GUILFORD, CT

When I was a boy, my uncle used to take my cousin and me camping in the Adirondack Mountains. There was a large lake we used to camp beside called Lake Pharaoh because the mountain that bordered it looked like the sarcophagus of a pharaoh. My uncle told us that the lake was bottomless, that no one had ever found the bottom of it. This idea frightened and fascinated me at the same time. As I placed my fishing pole over the side of the boat and watched my sinker take the hook down and down my mind would travel down with it into the invisible dark depths of the water. I remember simultaneously feeling fear and the excitement of mystery.

*TCC is a  
mysterious  
practice*

T'ai Chi Chih is a mysterious practice. I would guess that most people don't stay with it long enough to experience its depth. Maybe it's too scary. It, too, is a bottomless lake. It takes me down ever deeper into the murky depths beneath the surface of my body, beneath the ripples of my

emotions, beneath the thoughts of my mind. Beneath the ... I don't know what. There are no words. It takes me beneath air, beneath light, beneath my sense of me. Softer, softer ...beneath softness.

It is fearful and exciting. As I continue my practice, I find bits of

thoughts coming up like bubbles from the depths of Lake Pharaoh: "If I let go too much, will I die? Will I disappear? Will I be able to resurface? Will they know where to find me? No, they don't know how to get here; they don't know where this is."

Then there is this strange happening. Someone or something else is here with me. It is dancing with me. It is a being that can breathe under water, live in the murky depths and still see. It has its own light. I find I am dancing with it. It is mirroring my "taffy" movements, passing clouds with me; it is like dancing with God. As I emerge it stays down. We gently part. I surface, still alive, still breathing. I sit for a meditation period amazed, not only at the experience, but that there are not lines of people waiting to learn these movements, to delve into the mystery beneath their being. To experience what I have come to call, Dancing with God.



## How Much Is That Worth To You?

By RODNEY ANDERSON, ROSEVILLE, MN

I am the recent victim of a knee replacement. However, this is not a tale of woe but one of redemption. And that redemption has been T'ai Chi Chih. In the 12 years that I've been a student and then a teacher, I've become a huge believer in TCC's therapeutic value to heal or ameliorate all manner of ills. I've contributed to the *Blooming the Flower* publications and have enthusiastically preached the gospel of alternative medicine. However, after time, some things become too difficult to overcome. My daily TCC practice ran headlong into 37 years of pounding the pavements as a mail carrier.

My practice and teaching began to suffer as my knees betrayed me. I developed a nasty habit of rolling my knees as the weight shifted forward, to keep the direct pressure off my knees. But the worst was the evening I shifted my weight forward in front of a class and nearly wound up on the floor. It felt like a bolt of lightning had coursed through my knee. And things got worse: I began to miss TCC events in the Twin Cities and nationally. My teaching dwindled to one class, then to substitutions, then to nothing at all.

Fortunately, that's when my TCC family stepped in. I received an e-mail from that notorious scold, Nancy Werner-Azarski, my TCC "big sister" (who is a senior student of

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## If You Build It They Will Come

By SANDI HUEBEL, EDGEWOOD, NM

After being accredited as an instructor last November (on Justin's birthday) I wondered how to find students. I never saw myself as a teacher, but I knew I really wanted to share the *Chi*. Since I live outside of Albuquerque, I looked closer to home as many country people do not like going into the city. My husband and I have a chicken farm where we sell eggs, and some of my egg customers were interested in TCC, so I offered a class in my living room (less than perfect but a start).

Looking for another place to hold classes didn't appeal to me, so my husband suggested we set up our garage as a studio. After some thought about how to turn it into a part time studio, I went into action laying carpet (that I could roll up when needed), hanging curtains (to hide the other things in the garage), cleaning, and painting. I was ready. The only problem was I had no students. But

our mutual teacher and TCC "Dad," Ron Barker). "Have the surgery done!" wrote Big Sis, RN. "You want to walk. How much is that worth you? You can't do TCC? How much is that worth to you?" That's when I sought out an orthopedist.

Several rounds of cortisone and gelatinous injections worked a temporary magic. But finally I had to submit to the scalpel, for a half-knee replacement on one knee and a full replacement on the left. Next came physical therapy, with a wonderful young lady I affectionately called "Emily the Torturer."

I cannot tell you the joy I felt, however, a couple of weeks after the surgeries when I tried a full TCC practice. I set my fingers on the edge of the platter and stepped out with my left knee, began to roll the weight forward and ... *nothing!* My weight slid right to the correct position. Only those who have experienced great pain can know how wonderful *nothing* can feel. I still do the physical therapy exercises and walk a great deal. But TCC is the best post-operative therapy imaginable; it's my chief therapy for my knees *and* my life. I still have lots of rough edges in my practice to smooth (as I did before), but the effort is the message. And once again I can share in the fellowship, the commitment, and the *Chi* of our wonderful Twin Cities community and family. Interruption over. Like Justin's tree, the leaves grow back. The *Chi* resumes. In gratitude, the journey continues.



as soon as I made the decision to convert the garage, the Universe took over and the phone started ringing with students. In no time I had five students and a list of others who wanted a class at another time.

I can't tell you how excited I am at teaching. Each week I get a new thrill watching my students progress and seeing their smiles as they learn new movements. "I think I was over thinking it," more than one student has commented. I am now offering a free practice class for those who completed the eight-week course, and it's getting positive feedback. Someday I might be able to build a real studio, but for now I am so happy I made this decision.

## Service At Folsom

By Sr. Antonia Cooper, OSF, North Plainfield, NJ

**A**s we begin a new year I am reminded of the generosity of T'ai Chi Chih teachers. The quotation on front of *The Vital Force* is lived to the fullest: "T'ai Chi Chih is a Service to Humanity. It is a form of Love. Justin Stone." Dedicated teachers bring the form to just about every person who is willing to learn. Even if a class does not fill with only four registered, they will do it any way, making nearly nothing after room rental has been paid. They are convinced of the value of what TCC can do in the lives of those who learn and practice, and this alone can be the only return, especially when volunteering their time.

In 2005 and 2009, I accompanied Judy Trethewey into the Greystone Chapel of Old Folsom prison. Judy's dedication has taken her inside each week for the past 12 years (minus lockdowns.) She took down this conversation I had with the men during that day.

**Sister Antonia [to the inmates]:** Tell me about your TCC practice.

**Doc:** It provides what I call an instant vacation. It's not pleasant living here and TCC gives me the relief I need to keep going. Also, because we practice balance, I have learned to sense quickly when I am out of balance.

**SA:** TCC is a wonderful vehicle for evolving into who we are meant to be on this earth. Justin says "as we begin to change; the world around us changes." What's the greatest gift of TCC?

**Frank:** Freedom. We find an internal freedom on both a spiritual and physical plane. Also, I have become aware of how *Chi* follows thought. I can feel the *Chi* following my thoughts around.

**SA:** Have you tried mental TCC – feeling the TCC energy with out doing the movements?

**Steve:** I have been practicing going through the movements of TCC while I am walking on the track. I walk around and around in and out of folks. I get quieter and quieter, and the sense of flow keeps increasing as I imagine the movements.

**SA:** Have you ever tried walking from the *tan t'ien*? Much of the time, we operate from the ears up. TCC helps us to live from the ears down.

**Deville:** From TCC practice I have come into a knowledge of the way, balance and synchronicity. The way of differences, simplicity, *yin/yang*, finding within all that the smooth and peaceful energy flow.

**SA:** Chih means "knowledge of" ... awareness of the knowledge of self in space.

**Rick:** Before I just came to the group and practiced on my own once a week. Lately I have added a little TCC each day and I have

felt an increased calm. I have noticed other people's stuff versus me reacting to their stuff. I can step away and see it for what it is, and deal with it in a calmer manner.

**SA:** When I came in, I saw someone doing pushups with someone else on his back. That kind of exercise cultivates physical strength. TCC is soft. TCC builds up interior strength that uses no muscle. It will allow you to freely choose who and how you want to be. It is not so difficult to choose from your center. No one can knock you over.

**Gilbert:** Is it ok if I substitute "Holy Spirit" for *Chi*?

**SA:** Yes. It is how I experience this energy.

**Deville:** We each seem to move a bit differently. Everyone brings his own personality into TCC. Part of what I like, as opposed to martial arts with all the contests and belts, is that there is no competition.

**Steve:** At the dinner table I was answering another fellow's question: Is this a martial art? I said, no, it is not. TCC is to circulate the *Chi* in the organs and throughout the body and to build up the immune system; it's similar to meditation.

The men so deeply appreciate their teacher for her time, energy and teaching. They look forward to these classes that do, in fact, offer so much more than they could possibly get from any other activity. Teachers are encouraged to contact Judy Trethewey to learn from her experiences teaching TCC to inmates. You are also encouraged to tell this story to your own students, and practice sending healing *Chi* to all incarcerated people seeking true freedom. I'm grateful to Judy for her dedication, and for all TCC teachers who are bringing about change in people's lives. Continue to be about service which is a form of love.



## The “Joy” In Joy Thru Movement

By SANDY McALISTER, HAYWARD, CA

Joy is “the emotion of great delight or happiness caused by something good or satisfying,” says the Random House Dictionary. So, if T'ai Chi Chih is considered *Joy Thru Movement*, why do we always look so depressed or devoid of emotion when doing it? This leads to the question, how should we look? Should we have smiles plastered on our faces? Should we have to think about how we look? When I see a group of people doing TCC the look on their faces is one of deep reflection, a relaxation of the facial muscles, quietness. This is good, right?

Joy is an emotion as individual to each of us as our fingerprints. What brings joy to one person may be of no interest to another. For me the “joy” in TCC practice manifests in several ways. I relish and take great joy in the ah-ha moments when a new understanding unfolds during practice. I bask in the delight of what I feel, physically and emotionally, at the end of a practice. Occasionally strong emotions, often expressed by tears, can surface during a practice but usually an involuntary smile accompanies the tears coupled with a sense of lightness, or joy. (Go figure.) These are what might be called surface joys. They are immediately recognizable.

At the annual teacher’s conference this year we sat in silence at the end of each practice. I think this has real value. Not only from the standpoint of what is happening energy wise, but in being still with our own thoughts we can better recognize emotions and consciously recognize what we are experiencing. If we don’t take time to sit for a few minutes we immediately jump right back into habituated thought patterns. We may not discover how we feel. Oops, did we miss an opportunity to feel warm and fuzzy all over? Or, was it much more. Did we miss recognizing how it feels to experience an all-encompassing love, without judgment, emanating from us, in us, around us?

Is this the “joy” in Joy Thru Movement? Touching that core of our being and knowing, even if only for a glimpse, our true nature. The more we connect to the real essence of who we are the more we understand our path. The joy comes from freeing ourselves, briefly each practice, of our habit energies, our wants and desires, our jealousy, our shame, or whatever we carry the keeps us from being truly happy. The joy is a lightness in our Being, a smile in our hearts that may or may not spread to our faces. So look grumpy all you want during practice, I know the joy is bubbling inside.



## Seijaku Teacher Preparation

By PAM TOWNE, OCEANSIDE, CA

T'ai Chi Chih teachers have been asking how to prepare for attending a *Seijaku* teacher accreditation class. Just as when you prepared for TCC teacher accreditation class, your regular personal practice is the foundation of your preparation. So I encourage you to do some Seijaku every day.

A full practice of nine repetitions of each Seijaku movement every day is too much for most of us. So you might do as Justin suggested years ago and sandwich three Seijaku movements between TCC

movements. For example in doing “Around the Platter,” do three soft TCC style, then three Seijaku style, then three more TCC style to the left and then the same to the right. Continue this 3-3-3 format for each movement. An alternative would be to begin each movement with three Seijaku style and continue with six TCC style. I prefer to end with TCC to give the body plenty of opportunity to let go completely of any residual tension.

For some people, Seijaku is more enjoyable as a group practice. If you are having difficulty practicing by yourself, find someone to practice with. Practice with Justin via his Seijaku DVD. I invite you to watch it repeatedly, as you will discover new things each time. This is also an important part of your preparation for accreditation.

If at all possible, work with an accredited Seijaku teacher, even if you have to travel to do so. Unlike TCC teacher accreditation, you do not need any referrals to attend Seijaku accreditation; you just need to have been practicing Seijaku for at least six months. Still, it is extremely valuable to attend a Seijaku class or work privately with a teacher to receive feedback and answers to your questions.

There are three Seijaku accreditations scheduled this year; see the calendar on page 23. By attending the accreditation following the annual conference, you can attend two events for the price of one plane ticket. Plus you can have a longer immersion in *Chi* with like-minded friends. I invite you (TCC teachers) to plan now to attend both the teacher conference and Seijaku accreditation. It’s important to register early for the post-conference accreditation because rooms are filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

## Spreading Chi To New Learners

By ANDREA SKILLMAN, GURNEE, IL



How do we create a habitat for healing? One of my ways is by sharing my T'ai Chi Chih practice in new places with new people. I have been teaching TCC at the American Holistic Nurses Association (AHNA) Annual Conference for five years and want to share the enjoyment I feel from doing this. The first year I noticed how well these novices moved. How could this be? What did this group do differently than other groups I have taught? They all seemed to follow along so well. There were no hands opposing the weight shift, no drastic uneven knee bending; no one lost balance like my nursing home clients did. They moved so well that I settled in and allowed my still voice to guide me. I let the TCC do the TCC.

I wondered how many meditated regularly. Could this heightened awareness of being present in the moment be one reason they were so aware and immediately present in their bodies? I surmised that many of them probably worked out; holistic nurses are the epitome of good health. Many of them also know energy work. Maybe this phenomenon was

related to many studying *presence* as part of their AHNA certification. Knowledge is the first step to incorporating a new way of being, and the understanding of being present was part of their fabric.

I taught for all three mornings of the Colorado Springs conference and had over 25 students each morning. This was mostly their first introduction to TCC. This year I was fortunate to have two quasi TCC assistants. One counted for me, and the other had such a positive attitude, having just returned from an intensive. So our trio evolved. This allowed me to fully teach such a large group of new students, and this conference allows me to grow as an instructor.

My TCC teacher always stretched me as a student to try new venues and to do TCC in new places (in the house, waiting for the toaster to toast, at the airport, in the park, in the backyard, in groups and solo). She encouraged me to try new music, some with a mellow sound and others with a strong beat. At times I felt the rousing music was unrelated to my practice. How could I take this sound and find a rhythm of my own that seemed natural and in sync when the music seemed to arouse my senses. Would I have to separate the music from my rhythm? Should I just ignore the seeming disconnection? Maybe I should speed up my practice to match the music? What would it feel like to speed up the practice so that I feel like it was wrong? Does the music I do my practice with really matter? These questions came up and were puzzling at the time. Years later it seems that TCC can be done to any type of music. I feel the *Chi* flowing either which way; my body recognizes it when it arrives now. I stopped questioning the music. It all works somehow. The healing habitat I create is within me in the present moment.

The *Chi* now flows like an old friend, whether I feel challenged with teaching a new group of learners or I practice alone quietly. The *Chi* knows the flow routine, and I can reestablish my moment-by-moment sense of doing the form. The present moment is the only moment I have to work with. Yesterday was yesterday and tomorrow has not happened yet. My TCC reminds me of that.

*the Chi  
now flows  
like an  
old friend*

So it felt reasonable that I asked my quasi-assistant to do Pulling Taffy while mirroring me so the class could see how that worked. I wondered if any of them could see the energy exchange between us. The next day I had Debra from the intensive do Push-Pull with me. And at the end, I asked the whole class to partner up and do Push-Pull while mirroring each other. It was a little tricky getting them started but *magically* it worked. I would have thought this was too advanced for new learners but this group of really seemed to enjoy it. I must have been listening to my still small voice. A few students said they could feel the energy move right away. What joy this has been to share my TCC with such an avid group. If you get any new students around the country who have taken my class over the past few years, I hope I have set a healing habitat seed of presence and stillness.

## Benefits From Attending An Intensive

By DONNA McELHOSE, WILDWOOD, IL

### FOR TEACHERS:

- Explore and deepen your practice.
- Understand what has evolved in the community-wide practice of T'ai Chi Chih and what Justin Stone has been teaching teachers at conferences.
- Get insight into the preparation and expectation of teacher candidates.
- Learn about being the "second signature" teacher when preparing candidates.

### FOR CANDIDATES:

- Get the opportunity to work with one of the trainers.
- Take your practice to another level in preparation for teacher training.
- Deepen your understanding of the principles of TCC.
- Experience what the first half of teacher training will be like.
- Learn what's going well with your practice and what needs more attention.
- Share the learning experience with your teacher.

Teachers, since the teacher training course may be stressful for some candidates, why not send them well prepared for a wonderful learning experience.

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## Little Ones

By CHERYL HALL, CORNELIUS, OR

I have been introducing my first and second grade students to T'ai Chi Chih in the classroom for about eight years in Cornelius, Oregon. My mother, Shirley Hall, who volunteers in my classroom, introduces them to the movements during our Chinese New Year celebration. I continue with the practice throughout the year. My little students are always eager to learn.

This year, for the first time, I had a small group with me for a 30-minute period while my other students went to different classes each day. These students were eager to learn all of the TCC movements and were committed to doing so. Even when I was absent, they would play the music and show the substitute teacher what to do. I could see students enjoying moving outside of their physical education classes and recess. I let the children model my movements without scolding or forcing them in any way. Leaders emerged and others followed. I could see a calm come over them the more they learned the movements.

## New Beginnings

By RON RICHARDSON, TUPELO, MS

Life is full of new beginnings. From the time we are born and with each new day, our journey offers us many opportunities for new beginnings: when we go to school, when we marry, when we find work, when we receive children, when we are promoted, and when we retire. Thirty-four years ago I had a new beginning as a Director of Pastoral Care. After retirement, I had a new beginning as the Pastoral Visitor for First Presbyterian Church. And in 2003 I was certified as a T'ai Chi Chih instructor – another new beginning. I have taught a TCC class at the Wellness Center for the past 10 years, and recently I received this letter from two students after two months of class. Practicing TCC daily is a new beginning for Pete and Kathy:

"We knew very little about TCC when we approached you to teach us. Over the past couple of months we have learned so much that we wanted to share what it has meant to us. Pete describes this as a series of moving meditations. He read that it was good for balance and knew that as we get older, balance can sometimes be a problem. He also thought it would be good for relaxation and would provide other health benefits for the inner organs and muscles. These movements offer benefits to anyone at any age. The most difficult aspect for him was knowing how to perform the movements correctly and remembering the order of the movements.

I describe this as a series of 19 standing movements and 1 posture that circulates and balances the energy within our bodies so that we become serene beings in the midst of a chaotic world. During practice, I can feel the energy circulating within my body connecting me to everything and everyone in the world and beyond. Once learned, the movements can be done anywhere, any time, alone or in a group; they require no special outfits, no special equipment. I am not a morning person, but I have started setting my alarm to have a TCC practice at the start of my day to energize me, balance me, and set the tone for the day. The movements are not physically difficult, but they are mentally challenging at first. Initially, I felt kind of silly and uncoordinated doing some of the movements. It would be almost impossible to master them with only a book or a



DVD and without a knowledgeable, patient teacher. We both got frustrated at different times and appreciated your patient feedback and encouragement. Thank you for the gift of TCC."

## Have A Ball With TCC

By JUDY GEORGE, ROSEVILLE, MN

I'd like to share my experience using a large exercise ball with T'ai Chi Chih. I was in a car accident January 2010, and since my back and knees were suffering, I decided to practice seated TCC. Using a chair was very uncomfortable for my back, and standing made it difficult on my knees to shift weight properly. I decided to try the exercise ball and immediately felt comfortable and was able to practice TCC.

I taught my senior class while sitting on the ball. I have been inviting students who have injuries or difficulty using a chair to try the ball. So far it has been a success for most students. In the senior class I had an 82 year-old woman who was having a lot of knee pain, and to compensate she was leaning and reaching with her arms too much. I invited her to try the ball but she feared falling. I asked her to trust me and try something new. She agreed to try it and looked up and said, "This is comfortable, and I can do this." There was immediate success, and she felt safe.

I helped her by taking two chairs and putting them on each side of the ball; by standing behind her and guiding her to a seated position; by teaching her how to move slowly and gently while rocking forward and backward, focusing on feet and sitting tall on the sitz bone. When sitting on the ball we need a 90-degree angle from our hip – knees to ankles. Getting the right fit for each person is the key for successful use of the ball. Also, instead of the two chairs alongside the person, you could be a wall for support (if needed).

Since this is a senior class with many levels of ability, I used half sitting and half standing instruction. The students liked the variation/option to choose and honor those around them. The people who could stand embraced learning how to sit on the ball. The people sitting were open and humbled to receive the variation, especially when I invited them to allow our hands and feet to unite with theirs.



## Alternative Seijaku Teaching

By ANN RUTHERFORD, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

At the annual conference, Dan Pienciak asked, "Who teaches *Seijaku*?" Only five teachers raised their hands. Why? I began an informal survey of teachers who were accredited to teach it but did not. The reasons given were repetitive: "I don't understand it. It's beyond me. I'm not ready for it. It makes me angry." One of our most senior and active TCC teachers said, "Maybe some day I'll understand it enough to practice and teach it."

I am so grateful to live in Justin's town where I can ask him questions about the movements he has created. Several years ago, I made an appointment with him to share my method of practicing and teaching it. He listened, nodded, and said, "Of course, dear, *Seijaku* is a Heightened Awareness discipline."

Justin's *Heightened Awareness* book is a handbook for the practice of Vipassana, "a meditation which takes a very strong effort on the part of those practicing it, some of whom have experienced real insights from the practice." (*Heightened Awareness*, p 79). In the book, Justin asks the reader to become aware of but not attached to all sensory experiences, including *thought*. Thinking is the strongest sense, which we often confuse with permanence. Our thoughts often freeze us into responding a certain negative way. So doesn't it make sense to become aware of them so we can pass through them?

How do I weave Vipassana into *Seijaku* teaching? A student with the habit pattern of anger selects anger as her resistance wall. She starts flowing softly, approaching and opening to anger, and passes through the dense energy wall into the openness and freedom of TCC. Others who have a habit pattern of suffering will stay in the resistance so long that they are in agony. For those students, I suggest that they initially create a soft Jello-like wall through which they pass so they can feel what it's like to pass through impermanence. Once they develop the realization that form is emptiness, they then start hardening the density of their wall to strengthen this awareness.

The results of this method are shockingly wonderful. The students become joyful and liberated. Their awareness of their stuck energy is heightened. After all, we have to be aware of our fixations before we can choose to pass through them. *Seijaku* done with introspected Heightened Awareness is for those who want to work on their "stuff" and thereby deepen their gratitude and compassion towards themselves and others. Every student I've had, including myself, leaves class with a true experience of Justin's song: Joy, Joy, Healing thru Joy. Joy in the Heart, Joy in the Mind, Joy in the Soul."

## TCC/COPD Pilot Study Reports Positive Benefits

By HANNAH HEDRICK, MOUNTAIN VIEW, HI

T'ai Chi Chih teachers need only the laboratories of our own bodies, minds, and spirits, to promote TCC as a safe and effective movement system or "moving meditation" that increases lower extremity and core strength while improving physical balance and reducing stress. And people in wheelchairs or who, for other reasons, do seated TCC report an increase in upper extremity and core strength, as well as a greater sense of upper body balance and decreased stress.

But in order to reach chronic disease populations who could also benefit greatly from a regular TCC practice, it helps to be able to refer to research studies, especially if we seek to teach classes in health care institutions or educational systems. The article "T'ai Chi Exercise for Patients With Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease: A Pilot Study." (Respiratory Care, November 2010, Vol. 55, No 11, pages 1475-1482) offers a helpful description of COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) and includes conclusions relevant to the regular practice of T'ai Chi Chih.

There is some lack of clarity about the contributions of the 30-minute "warm-up exercises" (similar to the breathing/stretching program I teach), the small sample size, and the comment that T'ai Chi Ch'uan "has a high adherence rate." This may be true in research "studies," but it has been my experience that in general, T'ai Chi Ch'uan takes a considerable length of time to learn and to practice on one's own.

In any event, the 61 item bibliography is the best one I have seen that includes studies of the benefits of pulmonary rehabilitation and of *Chi Kung* (primarily T'ai Chi Ch'uan) on respiratory and other chronic conditions,

including arthritis, vestibulopathic postural control, bone mineral density, etc.

The bibliography includes two specific references to studies of T'ai Chi Chih:

1. #18, "T'ai Chi Chih as an intervention for heart failure" (JA Fontana, C Colella, et al; Nurs Clin North Am). I wonder if citation 41 to Fontana's "The energy costs of a MODIFIED form of T'ai Chi Exercise" (Nurs Res 2000) also includes T'ai Chi Chih. We know that titles sometimes say "T'ai Chi" when the article is about T'ai Chi Chih.
2. #44, "T'ai Chi Chih: an exercise option for older adults (J Gerontol Nurs, 1996).

I believe the T'ai Chi Ch'uan/COPD article points out the real "niche" for T'ai Chi Chih with the various lung and concurrent diseases cited in the article. As stated in the article and as TCC teachers know from their own experiences, "Maintenance of activity is universally problematic."

The study, although with a very small sample, substantiates what TCC teachers see over and over again: regular TCC practice produces "significant improvement" in many movement and general health dimensions.

Our challenge: experiencing and promoting the benefits of regular practice, even 10 or 15 minutes once or twice a day!



## Go With The Flow @ The 2011 Annual Teacher Conference

Ohio teachers invite T'ai Chi Chih teachers from around the world to the 2011 Teacher Conference from July 21 to July 24. We meet in Ohio, "The Heart of It All," at Sawmill Creek Resort on the shore of Lake Erie. We "Go With the Flow" as we merge the energy of our TCC movements with the beauty that surrounds us in this natural setting.

Sawmill Creek Resort, [www.sawmillcreek.com](http://www.sawmillcreek.com), is located at 400 Sawmill Creek, Huron, Ohio 44839, 419-433-3800. The closest airport is Cleveland Hopkins. Sawmill Creek is a first class resort in a unique woodland setting, nestled next to a barrier beach on the shore of Lake Erie – and adjacent to a 490 acre preserve. Amenities include an indoor and outdoor pool, marina, 18-hole golf course, trout stream fly-fishing and shopping. Plan ahead to make your teacher conference your vacation destination too. For area information, check out: [www.clemetparks.com](http://www.clemetparks.com), [www.positivelycleveland.com](http://www.positivelycleveland.com), [www.cedarpoint.com](http://www.cedarpoint.com), [www.friendsofimagemarsh.org](http://www.friendsofimagemarsh.org), [www.bsbobird.org](http://www.bsbobird.org).

Everything you need to know about the conference particulars and registration can be found on the website, [www.taichichih.org/conference.php](http://www.taichichih.org/conference.php), or by contacting Lucinda Kutsko at 330-727-4477.

## The Play Within The Play

BY JUSTIN STONE [TRANSCRIBED FROM THE 2005 T'AI CHI CHIH TEACHER CONFERENCE, ALBUQUERQUE, NM AND © GOOD KARMA PUBLISHING 2009]

Years ago, it was revealed to me, “Things are as they have always been.” I was puzzled by that for many years. If “things are as they've always been” that means there's been no change in what appears to be change in our world.

A few months ago, I had another major revelation, although I don't like to call it a revelation. When I say it was “revealed to me,” it has nothing to do with intellect at all. It has nothing to do with examining whether it's true or not because the facts were so outlandish. It was very hard to assimilate them. They answered the question of what was meant by, “things are as they've always been.” I thought, “What am I supposed to do with this information?” The only person who has any record of it is Sister Antonia [Cooper], and she's agreed not to reveal it until after I'm no longer here. ...

After this last revelation, which I discussed with Carmen [Brocklehurst] at some length, I said, “What am I supposed to do with it?” It makes it seem as though your situation in life is that of a *play within a play*. If you've ever seen a play that attempts to put on a play for the audience within the big play, then you know what I mean by *the play within the play*.

You could also say that is so when you go to the movies. You see a good picture; there's a screen and on it they show a view of life; and you become emotionally involved in it. Some people cry and react to it. But when the movie is over and they turn on the lights, what is left? A screen. The screen was there all the time, and the only real thing was the screen. The whole picture was only make-believe, a fantasy. This will give you an idea of what I mean by a *play within a play* ...

It was made plain to me that the sense of having an individual life is due to Time. Those of you who've studied [Eastern] teaching know the word *Maya*. *Maya* is the creator of illusion. The idea that Time is *Maya*, I've never heard of it. I've never read it. I've never even thought about it. The sense of Time gives you the sense of individuality. So this explained the meaning of “things are as they've always been.” Time is an illusion; time brings about the illusion. Now ... how is this going to help get you a better job or make more money? It's not going to help you at all. To most of you, it has no meaning. ...

The Chinese have a phrase – the “Un-carved Block.” According to what I understand, the Un-carved Block has never been carved. Adam and Eve never left the Garden of Eden. I began to realize, from the studies when I was interested in Zen, that Zuigan was a great Zen teacher. After he had his enlightenment, he found two things. One, he no longer had any interest in Zuigan. The ego had disappeared. The ego, of course, is a big hindrance. He also, immediately after he went to the latrine, looked out the window, and saw birds flying as he was reliev-

ing himself, and he said, “Nothing was moving.” It seems pretty obvious – he had gone beyond time. His enlightenment experience had taken him beyond time. I hear people use this expression “enlightenment” very loosely. It's not some intellectual exercise or mathematical problem, where you get the answer or something.

The meditation we do (it's called *turiya*, that's my name for it) is the fourth state of consciousness. There is waking, sleeping, dreaming, all ordinary states of consciousness, all of which, according to this, are an illusion. The fourth state of consciousness, which is spoken of in the East, is *turiya*. There's no thought when you're in the *turiya* state. You can't remember what may have happened in that state because there's no thought. So there can't be any memory.

I've said to the meditation group, “When I taught meditation in India, people told me it takes twenty or twenty-five years to reach that state.” The people who've joined the meditation group (and I don't think they're there by accident) have talked to me about their experiences [that have come relatively quickly]. I've said, “If I wanted to give you a gift, the greatest gift that I could give you is the touch of Reality, to have you enter the state of Reality, such as Zuigan had done, and you will come to know these things.” You won't think them out; they have nothing to do with thinking. You will come to know bits of truth, little by little. You will come (as I and many of the yogis I have meditated with) to visit these other universes. They're not somewhere here or there or somewhere way out in the distance. They are a different vibration. If you do work to raise your vibration, you will experience these things. ...

Let me bring it back down to *the play within the play*. What you're living, what your senses are revealing, is *the play within the play*. In the original play, the vast play, where there is no change, it's hard to conceive (although many teachers have spoken about it). There's been no beginning and there'll be no ending. It's hard to picture. The human mind can't believe that something doesn't have a beginning, or something doesn't have an ending. The *play within the play* is the world you're familiar with.

When Lynette said, “There's only one thing going on,” she was talking about the big play, the great play. Only one thing *is* going on. But we see many things going on every minute. Someone asked me, “Will T'ai Chi Chih help me see these truths?” I said, “Yes, T'ai Chi Chih has the ability (depending on how serious you are, how much you do, and how well you do it) to do many things. ...

Teachers of *the play within a play* say that each person is born for a purpose and that purpose will be carried out. Perhaps my purpose is T'ai Chi Chih.

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# A Joyous Celebration

By CARMEN L. BROCKLEHURST, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

Justin's 94th birthday on November 20th was exceptional, as usual. The 2010 summer conference theme of gratitude was palpable. For TCC practitioners, gratitude is a constant stream, a constant theme. And it showed up in so many ways. At 94 years old Justin was very much present with us all day long. Our gathering included TCC students, teachers, and friends, as well as attendees from the well-timed TCC intensive, many of whom hoped to meet TCC's vital originator. They were not disappointed. They came to be with Justin – to celebrate and to honor a life well lived.

Calls began coming in before 7:00am. Stacks of birthday cards from grateful TCC practitioners were collected, although Justin has asked us not to write. (No one expected a reply.) Artist and friend, Storm Townsend, had lunch with Justin; both appreciate the others' work. At high noon a TCC practice was held at the country's first TCC center, which was created because of Justin's vision. He knows that one day there will be many centers dedicated to TCC. Students and teachers – including Antonia, Pam, and Sandy and about 70 others – traveled from Canada, around the U.S., and from within New Mexico to join the celebration. Shy teenagers, who have been touched by his energy and felt his love and support as they blossom, gave up an evening of cell phone connection to connect with the Master, heart to heart. Even 3 year-old Leila Berg, head bald from chemotherapy, came smiling and blessing us all. She most assuredly showed us that

Joy is our true nature, regardless of what is going on. Justin's smile as he greeted her, and her smile as she looked into his eyes, was a treasure.

Music by two wonderful jazz musicians added yet another dimension of joy from and to Master Stone's life. So much joy was made manifest in that room that sometimes one could not hear the music. But from time to time it could be noticed that Justin was grooving with the music, reminiscent of his days as jazz bandleader.

Even the special women who care for Justin daily in his home came to celebrate. They often speak about what an honor it is to help him.

The joy of the celebration still hangs in the New Mexico air like roasting green chile on a crisp autumn day. Our heart-felt purpose for coming together was to honor such a great heart, one that has been selfless in its giving. He teaches us to love and share the Chi. Happy Birthday Master Stonesama.

*a great heart, one that has been selfless in its giving*



## Celebrating By SUE BITNEY, MN

Every November the Minnesota T'ai Chi Chih community comes together on the Friday evening closest to Justin's birthday to celebrate him and his gift of TCC. Teachers invite students to participate in a circle practice. A potluck meal provided by teachers follows, and students are our guests. This year 18 of us talked about what TCC it has meant to us. The evening ends with us singing Happy Birthday to Justin and TCC, and with cake and ice cream. We love coming together to celebrate the Chi that connects us. TCC brought our lives together and TCC keeps us in an ever-balanced relationship. Flow on, but always from the center.

## Are We There Yet?

By CHARLES HINTZ, HAYWARD, CA

in a kesa  
on a zafu  
how much zazen  
is a nà fú?



- A *kesa* is a symbolic robe made from discarded sheets once used to wrap bodies before cremation. These were found along the banks of the Ganges River, where the dead were cremated and the soiled sheets discarded. A kesa made in this way represents the transformation from the lowest of fabrics to the most holy (sacred). It's a kind of spiritual alchemy for the cloth.
- A *zafu* is a traditional round, pleated cushion used for sitting meditation.
- *Zazen* is the process of sitting in meditation, the heart of Zen Buddhist practice to calm the body and the mind, to experience insight, and to reach the state of satori (understanding).
- *Na Fu* means a comfortable retirement.

## Replenishing

By CHRISTINE BUREL, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

I returned to a beginning T'ai Chi Chih class eight weeks ago because I recognized that my frenetic, demanding life left me very little time for recouping myself physically and emotionally. And I recognized that if I did not do something to replenish my soul and my sense of self soon, I was going to continue to feel overwhelmed by my life instead of in control of it. I had taken the same class four years earlier but had, unfortunately, let my self and my practice lapse. This time I determined to practice more and really take TCC into my life. As a result TCC has helped me find some inner peace that I have sorely lacked recently.



I practice in the mornings before I go to work and/or run the kids to all their appointments. I especially enjoy seeing the birds and wildlife outside my living room window as I choose to set the foundation for my day with 15 minutes of my favorite TCC moves. (I am particularly partial to Around the Platter plus the Variation, Carry the Ball the Side, Pulling in the Energy, and Pulling Taffy - 1st Variation Anchor Step because of the fluidity and circularity I feel when doing them.) I also very much enjoy the Six Healing Sounds. I am thankful to have rediscovered TCC again. Practicing has helped me fend off the anxieties and stresses that I encounter in my everyday life with a sense of calmness, peace, and control.

## Creating

By CHRIS WEBER, OXNARD, CA

After attending a recent weekend retreat in Albuquerque, I was quite moved and am taking my practice more seriously now that I realize it is such a good way to get in touch with our true selves. I have been a busy bee for so many years (I'm 60 now) and have hardly slowed down enough to stay in any one moment for any length of time at all. And thus much joy has been missed in my life. I feel glimpses of that now, and it started with the retreat. I'm an artist and when I came home I decided to paint a picture of what the discovery of a more alert and aware self looked like on canvas. The result was this painting I call "Vital Force." I also offer a sonnet entitled "T'ai Chi Chih Rocking Motion."

In rocking motion, I do feel the *Chi*  
As I stay within the flow of sweet control  
Fingers flutter as my hands move smoothly  
My feet are moving but they do not stroll.

Rocking up on heels and lifting toes in place  
Makes someone really feel a true release  
As stress and tension drains from body's space  
Replaced with steady calm and increased peace.

All practice will bring constant healing joy  
And benefits for all to keep for life  
It's magical and not a silly toy  
So use it as you would a gentle fife.

Make music with your body and the *Chi*  
And you will gain in personality.



## What A Difference

By BARBARA PENCE, DYER, IN

In January 2009 I enrolled in a class I thought was T'ai Chi. Being a Type A personality, I arrived early and said hello to a young man walking in at the same time and asked if he was taking the class. He smiled and said, "I'm the instructor." Embarrassed, I smiled and sat down. When all the students arrived, Pete demonstrated T'ai Chi Chih. I was amazed, maybe hypnotized, at what I saw and felt – the inner sense of peace and tranquility so evident in his moves. The effortless grace and softness. The quiet practice. He made it look so easy and so beautiful. I wanted to keep this feeling. I thought, "this isn't what I thought I signed up for," but I knew I was hooked. When we all stood up and started to practice, I was going left instead of right, totally confused with Passing Clouds. Forget Pulling Taffy; I'd never get that. Geez.

Fast-forward one year: I am able to do all the moves; all the moves have changed the way I feel; my thinking is so much clearer; my memory is getting better; the arthritis that plagued my back is almost non-existent. Before TCC one of my biggest problems was falling. My family was starting to worry; it seemed as though I was down more than I was up. But I haven't fallen once this year. Amazing. Three years ago I lost most of the hearing in one ear, and the doctors said it would not come back. Well, it *has* started coming back. My blood pressure has gone down over 30 points. I'm no longer ruled by a clock. I find myself listening more. I find myself quieter, yet a full feeling of life feels like it is growing inside.

Our instructor happens to be the only certified TCC instructor in northwest Indiana. He is humble in his presentation and teaching, patient, and makes every week a unique learning experience. He constantly is working on us getting softer, feeling more *Chi*; and we are improving. Very few people miss class. You can't imagine the difference TCC has made in my life.

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## TCC At The 92nd Street Y

By LUCILLE PORTER, NY, NY

At age 80, I have a history of lower back problems. Even though the pain flares up every so often, it's generally under control. What I find so interesting is that when I feel stiff, or begin to ache in a particularly vulnerable place, or when I wake with mild back pain, I decide to go to my T'ai Chi Chih class anyway. And within the first few minutes of class, my back is fine. Since taking the class, whenever my lower back begins to bother me, I do the TCC routine. Even if I do not have time to complete all the movements, I can feel my back relax, and then I can go about the usual daily activities. Pretty amazing.

## Essential Companions

By AMY TYKSINSKI, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

The effort of no effort. Swimming through very heavy air. Slow motion in a dream. Softness and continuity. "What would it be like to practice with one of these qualities as a companion?" I asked my students. "Pick one," I encouraged, "... actually don't worry about picking one. It will pick you, like the Harry Potter sorting hat." And off we went practicing together, having identified one of these qualities through which to move. We attempted to find it, embody it, feel it internally and externally, through the movements and even when simply standing and breathing. What follows are some of my high school students' responses to this exercise:

"Softness. Softness was easy. But staying with it, really feeling into the nature of softness was difficult. Softness was easefulness; it was the perfect smoothness and contentment of each passing moment. Even when my knees were hard against the movement, there was still a soft space between that sensation and myself. It was always here, with and without me. And I had never before noticed the immediate, almost distracting beauty outside the window..." [At this writing, grey snow clouds are billowing over the Sandia Mountain range in New Mexico.] – COLE HELSELL

"I tried the 'effort of no effort,' which was something that I've never really focused on before. In the backward/forward movements, I found myself getting out of sync easily, because I was concentrating on being 'effortless.' However, I fancy myself a bit successful with the side-to-side movements. I was thinking about the hip swivel, and then I realized that I shouldn't be thinking about it; I should just be doing it. That shed light, for me, on the concept of the effort

of no effort. It was effortless just to do it, without thinking about it, and the effort came from the act itself." – HALEY MANESS



"When we started to do Rocking Motion and you told us that 'the idea will

pick you,' I automatically knew that it would be 'effort of no effort.' As I focused on it throughout the set of movements, I found that my body was almost moving on its own. I was aware of my body but not necessarily telling my body to move in certain ways that I normally do. I also noticed that the air around me seemed almost non-existent. It was very easy to move through. I liked this idea because it let me focus on the finer points of the movements." – KRITI PRASAD

## From Performance To Prayer

By JUDY CHANCEY, ATLANTA, GA

There are days and moments in each of our lives that seem to live in our memory with a brighter intensity than the moment itself. After a letter, a phone call, an invitation, an event, a glance, a chance encounter, we might look back to realize how profoundly our lives were impacted in an unsuspected manner. We look back in awe to the significance of such a moment.

Do you remember the moment that led you to practicing T'ai Chi Chih? And after you were introduced to, or called towards, TCC, why have you continued? As I probed that question, numerous reasons came to mind (as if I even needed a reason). Justin instructs us to "practice when you feel like it, and practice when you don't." Certainly, that's motivation enough; yet, I suspect that if we look closely, each of us has a personally compelling story as to why we make TCC a top priority each day. I also suspect our motivations to practice have evolved congruent with our practices.

I think it's easy to underestimate TCC – and I absolutely love it when my students reach their first realization of the potency within their practice. Who would think that the shifting of one's body weight, coupled with some coordinating, mechanically circular wrist movements, could significantly (and positively) alter one's physical, mental, and spiritual experiences?

I'm reminded of the concentration it took to coordinate the weight shifts with the continuity and softness of gentle, even, hand/wrist movements. The observant and judging mental exercise shows up from time to time as I learn from other teachers' demos and revisit Justin's DVDs and books. It seems that within the learning, the components of the 'doing' exist: the mimicking and performance of specific instructions and corrections as we repeatedly explore the movements with our instructors. Each of us brings sincerest intentions to our learning; even so, in that process, it is we who are consciously *doing* TCC. I remember the first time I heard Justin speak about "TCC doing TCC." I confess to being perplexed by his words because I was so deeply immersed in the "doing" of the learning.

As if *doing* wasn't enough, there was also that thing about *feeling* the movements. In my naïve beginner's mindset, my

relationship with feeling had more to do about when and where the hands and wrists were in sync with the weight shifts. (At that time, the *tan t'ien* remained hidden.) I felt the soles of my feet, polarity between the palms, cold fingers, sporadic finger trembles, and the release of stress as a sense of calm and joy overtook my senses. Being in my head, I made mental notes of each of these so-called feelings. And, might I add, I also felt great pride in what I thought was "feeling" my practice – joyfully oblivious that my practice was actually more performance.



Do you remember when TCC began doing TCC? For me, it had everything to do with continuing my TCC practice. Commitment to going deeper into practice led me to understanding, locating, and moving from the *tan t'ien*. From there, the experiential richness of my practice increased in ways I never suspected possible – or I would have missed had I not continued on a regular basis.

Moving from the *tan t'ien* brought new dimension and depth to my practice. Once my awareness dropped from my head into my core, I began feeling TCC doing TCC. I'm certain my eyes widened with surprise at the initial realization. Fortunately, the grounding effect of being in one's *tan t'ien* allowed me to be in my practice as an honored and humbled guest in the center of the *Chi's* flow.

Moving from the *tan t'ien* shifted my practice from performance to what I can only describe as a state of prayer – one that has no "dear anyone" or "please" or "help me." It's a feeling of connection a Vital Force far grander than I comprehend. In this place, I feel as though I exist inside a sacred chamber of serenity, peace, love, joy, and gratitude – a place where all is well and I am one with All That Is, a reunion with the Uncarved Block. It is a place I can return to each time that I center myself in the *tan t'ien* to become one with my practice.

I know others describe very similar experiences. I also see it in my advanced students' faces when the *Chi* enters their practice. The furrowed brows and lines in their faces disappear. Their skin glows as they flow without thinking about or judging performance of mechanics. There are times when each of us shares the feeling that something far greater than we, the *Chi*, has taken over and moved us as one unit.

Each of us has at least one personal reason why we embrace the importance of TCC practice. Imagine what we might have missed had we not practiced when we didn't feel like it. On second thought, please don't imagine that. Instead, let's welcome the Blessings yet to be revealed as we continue TCC practice.

# Student Voices – Grateful And Growing

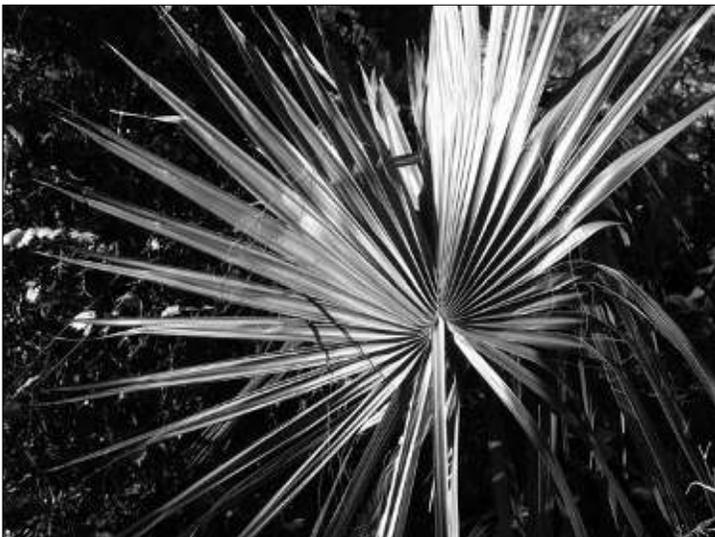
COLLECTED BY SHEILA LEONARD, PBVM, NL CANADA

**H**ere is a taste of why our Newfoundland students keep practicing T'ai Chi Chih:

“When I finished my working life three years ago, I decided to try something completely new and enrolled in a TCC class. Little did I know about the wonderful door that would open. TCC has been a life changing experience that has brought joy, peace and gratitude into every day. One of the most difficult movements to learn was Working the Pulley, but I finally got it. Now I feel like clothes on a line, gently flowing in the soft breeze, keeping rhythm with the universe. And of course the sun is always shining.” – SUE C.

“‘Serenity’ I answered, when asked what I was hoped to gain from my first TCC weekend. My hopes were met, and I continue to practice regularly, thankful for serenity and other benefits I’ve noticed. That first weekend I’d just had cortisone injections into my shoulder to alleviate torn rotator cuff pain. My shoulder, neck and back muscles were a knotted mass of misery; painkillers were frequent companions. Today I am pain-free. My shoulder has healed without surgical intervention. While my physiotherapist deserves a good deal of credit for that reversal, I think that TCC has also been an integral part of the healing package. As I go through my daily practice, I feel my posture improve, my muscles relax and my sense of well-being increase.” – MILDRED B.

“It helps to set aside a special time each day when I can relax and recharge. What I like best is the peaceful feeling everything in TCC just flows. I’m also experiencing how important that rest is between movements. It helps settle me down before I move on.” – JUDY S.



“The more I practice TCC, the more it’s like changing a square into a circle as I move my hands in Around the Platter.” – LYNN

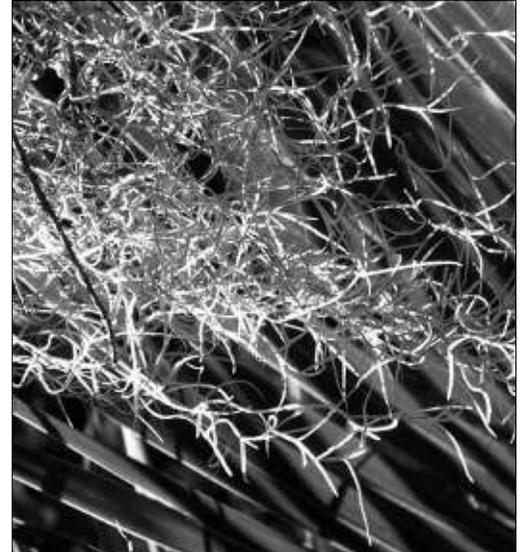
“Before TCC, I would be awakened at night by pain in my knees. But after the fourth session, it was gone.” – JUDY F.

“I generally have really bad migraines that last for three days. TCC seems to hold them at bay and I don’t get them as often. Medication plus TCC at onset stops them. But with medication alone, they still go full tilt. When I missed TCC a couple of days, I had a really bad three day bent.” – BEV L.

From students at an initial lunchtime employee wellness “Come and See” session: “I could see and feel an immediate calm come over you as you began.” A second person chimed in “and over all of us, too.” ...

“It felt like I was on my cabin deck in the country” ... “I had a real sense of balance and that’s what I really need” ... Classes are now underway there.

On a different note, classes continue to grow throughout our province, but they are no longer all mine. Some of newly accredited teachers have begun offering classes in areas where I used to travel extensively to teach. And now I am a little more freed up to teach in new places. Yes, indeed, “Sometimes to keep something, you have to give it away.”



## NL Canada: “Places to Go with Sharon Snow”

NTV, a local province-wide station, invited us to do a T'ai Chi Chih “Places to Go with Sharon Snow” segment that ran on the evening news. They taped 15 minutes and aired three minutes of Sharon learning TCC, with some of my students continuously moving as backdrop. The editing was good, all things considered, and we received lots of positive feedback. Hope it inspires others to do something similar. The segment can be viewed at <http://www.ntv.ca/video/?p=1061>. Amazing what TCC enables us to do.

# Light At The Top Of The Head / Light At The Temple

By AMY TYKSINSKI, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

*Editor's Note: Amy attended a recent TCC retreat given by Carmen Brocklehurst and has written up what Carmen taught for each movement in the hope that others may benefit.*



**N**ote that this is Temple – without an “s.” It’s a different kind of temple; the body is a temple beautiful. The ancients say that the best way to break the connection to the past is to bear down into it. Pushing down first in Light at the Top of the Head breaks the connection with the past. When the arms come to the top of the head, they open no further than “goal post” position. They are no higher than the bottom of the wrists brushing the top of the head. The wrists circle around – slowly. It is not a “windshield wiper” action, but a circular one. In Light at the Temple, Carmen suggests that advanced students should mix with the emphasis on the middle fingers at the temples rather than using the palm as the emphasis, which is best for beginning students.

*Editor's Note: The most important resource for teaching tips is Justin Stone. Watch and listen to him on his instructional DVD. And read about and inspect his movements in the Photo Textbook. Both are available from Good Karma Publishing @ www.gkpub.com. His words are also available in the essential booklet, T'ai Chi Chih Teaching Tips, available through the New Mexico T'ai Chi Chih Association for a small fee (www.taichichihassociation.org and 505-299-2095.)*

## Pyramid Poems

eyes  
larger  
than the sun  
keep me poised next  
to my tree  
release  
me  
– PETER CAUSEY

ground  
feel feet  
touch the earth  
sink into sand  
stay present  
feel the  
*Chi*  
– SHARON SIRKIS

cup  
empty  
letting go  
release happens  
awareness  
surprise  
me  
– MARGERY ERICKSON

wind  
blow wild  
see the leaves  
move back and forth  
calm movement  
within  
flows  
– JOYCE V

man  
of all  
seasons he  
full of chi grace  
solid in  
the knees  
wise  
– JIM SHORR

all  
today  
is for us  
the last hurrah  
of future's  
present  
past  
– ANDRES PAEZ

soft  
yielding  
welcoming  
transitioning  
joyfully  
into  
peace  
– ALLAN, NL

rain  
starts with  
soft drops 'til  
momentum gains  
becoming  
river  
flow  
– EVEY

great  
teacher  
that you are  
thanks for being  
joyfully  
with us  
here  
– DIANNE MOODY

truth  
can be  
found within  
why do we spend  
so much time  
searching?  
be  
– JUDY

fish  
swim past  
free to go  
to where they please  
in the blue  
free at  
sea  
– GINI BAILEY

deep  
focus  
inside me  
sharing softness  
with others  
open  
now  
– MARGERY ERICKSON

stay?  
what stays?  
nothing stays  
impermanence  
everything  
comes to  
pass  
– ROBERT

I'm  
trustin'  
in justin  
to keep us in  
the circles  
not in  
trance  
– JIM SHORR

he  
who loves  
lives in the  
heart of someone  
else even  
after  
death  
– SANA MASOOD

## Growing Wings Retreat with Carmen Brocklehurst in Albuquerque, NM; October 21-24, 2010

BY JUDY HENDRICKS, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

Rumi said “With friends you grow wings.” At Carmen Brocklehurst’s recent T’ai Chi Chih retreat it was a time to grow and test our wings. Carmen always asks us what we are feeling as we do the movements; she asks us to pay attention to the movement of the *Chi*. She gently challenges us to go deeper into the practice, to have the *Chi* flow as much as possible. I know I inadvertently do things like hold tension in my hands, which blocks the *Chi*. With her guidance and reminders, it’s wonderful to relax the hands and feel the *Chi* fully flow.

When paying attention, I can feel the *Chi* in my hands after letting go of the ball in Around the Platter Variation. I can also feel the roundness of the pulley in Working the Pulley. In Rocking Motion I notice the roundness and also pay more attention to the wrists. During the side-to-side movements, I have to remind myself to do the hip swivel. For Daughter on the Mountain Top I feel so much more polarity when I start with the palms facing each other. These simple things really lead to feeling much more *Chi* and deepening my practice. As a result, it has become an experience of merging with divinity.

I know everyone goes deeper into his or her practice at the retreat; you can hear it in the expressions of gratitude. Carmen says she also feels blessed since her TCC goes deeper and she learns more. I was glad to hear that. I guess it is like *yinning* and *yanging*, giving and receiving.



I’m grateful for the opportunity to deepen my practice.

## Intensive with Pam Towne in Albuquerque, NM; November 18-21, 2010

### My Experience

BY JULIE HERVET

Being in one room with so many great teachers and accessing their collective wisdom was incredibly helpful, and Pam set such a supportive tone that being corrected felt like receiving a lovingly wrapped present. I couldn’t scribble notes fast enough to keep up with the useful tips shared. But learning more about T’ai Chi Chih is what you’d expect from an intensive. What I didn’t expect was the growth I experienced personally. I let down walls I didn’t know I’d built, and I saw that I was capable of much more than I knew. I think this accounted for much of my post-intensive-glow. I have never before felt such an immediate sense of camaraderie and ease among such a large group of strangers. Almost instantaneously we were bonded together by wanting to improve our TCC form. These “strangers” seemed familiar, as though, while practicing in our own little corners of the planet, our introductions had already taken place in the *Chi* field. I came away fired up about my practice – excited to belong to such a community, excited to feel the effects of practice on my body and soul, excited to incorporate all the new information I’d been given, and excited at becoming a link in the chain of teachers. Every day as I practice I see the faces of my classmates, and I feel grateful to have practiced with them. Still, in our own little corners of the planet, yet together.

### Breakdown/through

DIANA RISTENPART, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

I saw my comfortable practice of T’ai Chi Chih fall apart at the seams in just a few days at this well-named intensive. As I began to correct mistakes, I began to doubt myself and, therefore, created more dis-ease. As I went through disappointment and self-doubt, it was helpful to hear others share similar experiences, and when teachers spoke about areas where they needed correction, I was amazed. I assumed that once you were a teacher, you knew all about TCC. Some beliefs we hold can be completely untrue.

Pam, Sandy, Antonia and Dan continued to help with love and care as we practiced moving in new ways. For a week after the intensive I found it difficult to practice; I was thinking constantly rather than experiencing TCC. Was my stance correct? Was I moving from the *tan t’ien*? Was my leg straight? This went on for some time. I no longer felt the *Chi* moving; it was exasperating. But I kept on; I didn’t stop practicing, even though my mind often suggested it.

Only one month after the intensive, while practicing on a deck in Seattle, did I begin to feel at ease with my practice. My body moved comfortably. I felt the *Chi* circulating and supporting me. I am grateful for this period, for what I learned, for the difficulties afterward, and for the perseverance. It reminded me of break-downs earlier in my life that became break-throughs, enabling me to move forward with a new vision. I might compare it to our current civilization (with economic woes, peak oil, climate change), a time when we will experience breakdowns before we can breakthrough to a new way of relating to each other and the earth.

# TCC-Prajna Focused Weekend With Sandy McAlister in Aston, PA; October 1-3, 2010

## Quieting, Connecting, Transitioning

BY DEB BERTELSEN, MAPLEWOOD, MN

The grounds feel hallowed, holy, sacred. The energy of those who have come before us is palpable. Their footprints provide guidance to serenity, peace, calm, silence. The mind-body-spirit connection is here. It is not visible, but one feels it immediately upon entering. The setting quiets the mind, relaxes the body, and lightens the spirit. And then ... you just whisper. To be of normal voice and tone would be too brash, too harsh.

We are looking at *prajna*-wisdom, prana-*Chi*, and connectedness. Our purpose is to go within, to allow our prajna-intuitive wisdom to guide us to an intention of living in the moment and not trying to figure everything out. By looking at our T'ai Chi Chih practice and the movements, we uncover and discover the connectedness, the softness and openness that is integrated with the hands and fingers. With our wrists we feel a bend (closed), release (neutral), and open to continue the flow of *Chi*. So too with our waist as it responds to the weight shifts.

For me the transition toward discovery of prajna required quieting the body through TCC practice, through times of silence (with reflection to quiet the mind), and through journaling what came to me. This inward reflection brought new awareness, knowledge, and insight. Letting go of ego and *vashanas*, being patient and tolerant, living in the moment – they all allowed for the opportunity to shift the paradigm from self-serving to serving others. Perhaps it is a rebirth, a new sense of self and how I might better serve others in a different way.



When we leave, a part of our energy will remain to embrace those who follow. May they find the peace and serenity that permeates these walls-that we did. May our spirits connect. May they be patient and allow that which will happen to unfold-Prajna.

wax  
crayons  
delighted  
my inner child  
longing to  
create  
art  
– SHARON SIRKIS

first  
prajna  
pioneers  
day of silence  
just about  
knocked me  
out  
– SHARON SIRKIS

still  
listen  
hear the sounds  
clang and clatter  
silverware  
does its  
dance  
– SHARON SIRKIS

love  
prajna  
all around  
enveloping  
our beings  
inside  
out  
– MARY GRIFFIN

## Pioneers

BY APRIL LEFFLER, PROSPECT PARK, PA

Twenty “Prajna Pioneers” attended this first-ever weekend at the beautiful Franciscan Spiritual Center, where the intention was to provide an opportunity to use T'ai Chi Chih as a springboard to dive more deeply and consciously into *prajna*. Beyond that, no one was quite sure of what to expect. The weekend began with participants sharing their thoughts, definitions, and examples of prajna. As Sandy deftly led the group into discovering more feeling and nuance from how we move in our TCC practice, each practice was followed by silence. Except for the break out sessions, most of Saturday was spent in silence so as to attune ourselves to our prajna. Although the day of silence was a surprise to many, most participants reported that it was a powerful and pleasant surprise; some found it deeply needed. Intermittently and while sitting as a group, we each pulled a quotation from a basket relating to prajna and interconnectedness, and we contemplated the reading in silence. Many participants journaled their experiences and were amazed at the profundity revealed. The weekend ended with sharing suggestions and requests for longer and more TCC-Prajna gatherings – with a healthy dose of more silence. And since this was my first event as host, consider your request filled: Look for another prajna retreat in the future.

## Two More Thoughts

“The weekend offered the opportunity to embrace the essence of T'ai Chi Chih while tapping into the heartbeat of the universe.”  
– SANDI CANNELLOS, NY

“Yet another layer explored another step deeper into the practice. Sandy took us ‘outside the box’ as we looked at and shared how prajna moves in our lives. We paid a little different attention to how the *Chi* moves in our physical selves and then how both the prajna and *Chi* work together and the way we each experience that energy. The time of silence allowed us to really integrate so many things and most of us discovered we want a whole day of silence next time. As Marilyn said, ‘Silence makes it all that much more intimate.’” – BY KIM FOLLMER, PA

## Attendees Value TCC Benefits

### Teacher Accreditation with Sandy McAlister in New Jersey; October 4-9, 2010

BY DANIEL PIENCIAR, HOWELL, NJ



**T**hirteen candidates and several teachers (along with Antonia, Sandy, and myself) arrived at the Mount Saint Francis Center for Spirituality in October. Several of us especially savored the beauty and hospitality, knowing that the center will soon close permanently and that this would be our last accreditation after nearly ten years here. But as usual, the tone of the week was not one of finality (as if completing a journey) but rather of newness and opportunity (as in beginning a journey). On the first morning, candidates shared their reasons for attending the T'ai Chi Chih accreditation: accessing serenity, sharing the goodness received from the practice, grounding the energy, connecting with one's deeper self, valuing it for therapy and healing, its meditative benefits, and knowing that there are ready audiences waiting to learn.

Teachers also shared what TCC has brought them: accessing of inner wisdom, hearing how the practice has changed students' lives, the general good feeling in doing TCC, how the practice puts us in touch with deep gratitude, the physical benefits to students, and how TCC can get us out of our heads.

The teacher candidate presentations were very inspirational, but I found that my pen couldn't move fast enough to capture the freshness from each candidate. Nonetheless, readers may find these jotted notes helpful:

- Increasing the circulation of *Chi* is like getting the kink out of a hose so that the water can flow freely and powerfully.
- Empathizing with a particular audience is highly effective.
- Sharing with an audience how TCC has changed your own life.
- In a corporate setting, emphasize being open to a different experience and the possibility of accessing inner wisdom.
- Presenting TCC as a possible effective preventative for health problems.
- Presenting TCC as accessible to people with physical limitations.
- Sharing the experience and importance of feeling the flow of *Chi*.
- Stimulating the life force can help make one feel younger and stronger.
- Emulating joy in speaking about TCC and the possibilities of personal transformation.
- For audiences with eating disorders (or other addictive behaviors), addressing the idea of the habit energies and the concept of bringing balance into our lives.
- Speaking of how the flow of *Chi* can wake us up and how habits can be erased.
- Presenting TCC as a gift to give yourself that is as alive and fresh as moving water.
- Practicing TCC can bring peace and acceptance after the trauma of loss and life changes.
- Introducing TCC to those at senior facilities as a way to bring more life into your life.



1. At the end of T'ai Chi Chih class at the MS DayGroup, I said, "Feel into your body, see if there's anything you need, such as stretching your body slightly." Jai said, "I need some liquor." Everyone laughed, including me, as I said, "I've been teaching since 1997 and I've never heard that request before. Great joke." And Doug, another class member, promptly replied, "How do you know she's joking?"

2. Margie was the substitute coordinator the day that I taught TCC at the MS DayGroup. She was impressed at how I was able to teach through the many interruptions and distractions, such as the door opening many times and the phone ringing off the hook. At the end of class, she said, "You are an excellent teacher, Sharon," and without missing a beat, a gal named Sharon in the group jumped right in and said, "Why thank you very much."

3. At the end of TCC class at the retirement home, I asked Syd, "Do you want to say anything?" And she said, "Can I take you to bed with me?"

4. As I was teaching the waist turn in seated TCC, I mentioned how you could shift your weight onto the butt cheeks – first one side, then the other. Ruth, a resident at the retirement home, said joyfully, "Oh, I see, we are dancing cheek to cheek."

5. A huge double-sided billboard in front of Bon Secours Spiritual Center in MD, advertised my TCC workshop along with another workshop given by someone else. One side of the billboard said T'ai Chi Chih. The other workshop was "God is Trying to Tell You Something: Receiving a Vision for Your Life's Mission." However, there was only room on the billboard for "God is Trying to Tell you Something." I had a good laugh as I read both sides of the billboard and thought, yeah, God is trying to tell you something, take T'ai Chi Chih.

– FROM SHARON SIRKIS, COLUMBIA, MD

## Ladies and Gents, Your (uh) Tension, Please

BY PETER GREGORY, HIGHLAND, IN

People hear me now, believe me later, I have a great and glorious secret to share that will deliver free, clean, renewable energy for the rest of your life! This is the elixir, the tonic, the balm, the answer to your most ardent prayer! No pills to eat, no magic words to repeat, no ruby slippers for your feet. Simply quiet the mind and keep the beat.

Just step right up folks, leave your worries behind, dissolve your tensions, say goodbye to your ego and hello to the soles of your feet. I'm talking about the mystery of creation, which starts with a "C," and rhymes with *Chi* and comes after "B." Just Be. Don't cling. Don't sing. Just Be. Don't think. Don't shrink. Just Be.

When you can just be, step out with the left heel about shoulder width, bring your knees forward, rise up onto the balls of your feet, and enter into Rocking Motion. Act now! Accredited instructors are standing by.

"...Should I be fated to return, I would like to work to still the hatred in people's hearts." – Justin Stone, *Spiritual Odyssey* (p.18)

Trying is not the Way  
Not trying is not the Way  
You say it must be one or the other  
But I say  
Neither Nor  
– Justin Stone, *Spiritual Odyssey* (p.15)

## Where In The World

Please send photos of yourself or other practitioners doing T'ai Chi Chih somewhere in the world to *The Vital Force* if you would like this to be a regular feature. November 2010 issue: Helena Fox-Beaudoin (of California) in Machu Picchu.



## Pyramid Poems

walk  
around  
looking down  
weedy circles  
going round  
broke my  
heart  
– CYNTHIA

what  
happened  
broken winged  
butterfly on  
the graveled  
circle  
gone  
– NANCY LITTLE

the  
hardest  
thing of all  
is letting go  
of the past  
to stay  
now  
– MAGGIE SMITH

not  
this way  
not like that  
netti netti  
soft moves flow  
come to  
this  
– RHONDA ST MARTIN

I  
do not  
know which way  
darkness surrounds  
T'ai Chi Chih  
lights the  
way  
– DAN PIENCIAK

# T'ai Chi Chih Community Calendar

DATE	WHAT & WHO	WHERE	CONTACT
February 22-25	TCC Teacher Retreat w/ Antonia	Santa Barbara, CA	Pam Towne / 877-982-4244 pamtowne@gmail.com
February 26	TCC Teacher/Student Workshop w/ Antonia	Walnut Creek, CA	Athene Mantle / 510-828-8896 chigoddess@hotmail.com
February 27	TCC Teacher Workshop w/ Antonia	Oakland, CA	Athene Mantle / 510-828-8896 chigoddess@hotmail.com
March 14-19	TCC Teacher Accreditation w/ Sandy	Burlingame, CA	Athene Mantle / 510-828-8896 chigoddess@hotmail.com
March 24-27	TCC Intensive w/ Sandy	Ringwood, NJ	Daniel Pienciak / 732-988-5573 wakeupdaniel@aol.com
April 8-11	TCC Retreat w/ Antonia	Houston, TX	Carletta LaCour / 713-440-3713 carlettaop@yahoo.com
April 14-17	TCC Retreat w/ Antonia	Albuquerque, NM	Carol Roeske roeskescands@msn.com
Apr 29– May 1	Seijaku Teacher Accreditation w/ Pam	Fountain Valley, CA	Diana Wright / 714-963-2146 dianawright@socal.rr.com
April 29– May 1	TCC Retreat w/ Antonia	Edmonton, AB	Gail Terriff / 780-430-6594 tai_chi_chih_edmonton@hotmail.com
May 9-14	TCC Teacher Accreditation w/ Pam	St Paul, MN	Sue Bitney / 612-353-4968 smbitney@gmail.com
May 12-15	TCC Retreat w/ Antonia	Ringwood, NJ	Daniel Pienciak / 732-988-5573 wakeupdaniel@aol.com
July 21-24	Teacher Conference	Huron, OH (Lake Erie)	Linda Kutsko / 330-727-4477 healingjourneys9@aol.com
July 24-26	Seijaku Teacher Accreditation w/ Pam	Huron, OH (Lake Erie)	Daniel Pienciak / 732-988-5573 wakeupdaniel@aol.com
Nov 14-19	TCC Teacher Accreditation w/WHOM	Albuquerque, NM	Ann Rutherford ruthergary@aol.com

## MORE WORKSHOPS & RETREATS

(Postings here are open to all teachers offering events wholly devoted to TCC.)

March 26	TCC Workshop w/ Sharon Sirkis	Marriottsville, MD	Sharon Sirkis / 410-730-1986 sirkisprice@verizon.net
April 15-17	TCC Men's Retreat w/ Daniel Pienciak	Ringwood, NJ	Daniel Pienciak / 732-988-5573 Wakeupdaniel@aol.com
May 12-15	Seijaku Retreat w/ Dan Pienciak	Ringwood, NJ	Daniel Pienciak / 732-988-5573 wakeupdaniel@aol.com
May 12-15	TCC Retreat w/ Carmen Brocklehurst	Albuquerque, NM	Judy Hendricks / 505-897-3810 judyhendricks@me.com

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**2011 Teacher Conference: Go With The Flow**  
The 2011 Teacher Conference will be held July 21 to July 24 in Ohio at Sawmill Creek Resort, [www.sawmillcreek.com](http://www.sawmillcreek.com), on the shores of Lake Erie. Visit [www.taichichih.org](http://www.taichichih.org) for conference particulars and registration. Or you can contact Lucinda Kutsko by phone at 330-727-4477.

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### GUIDE

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### TEACHER RESOURCES

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### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

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Date you were accredited as a T'ai Chi Chih teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Date you were accredited as a Seijaku teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the teacher who taught you T'ai Chi Chih \_\_\_\_\_

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